

7-023 1966 International Gypsy  
Cttee Letter

Greenways  
Knockholt  
near Sevenoaks  
Kent

October 18th., 1966

Dear Dolly,

It was good to hear from you. I hope this letter reaches you at home and that you're feeling better. Thank goodness you have Philomena to keep things going.

Well, I took in what you said about young Donald Driscoll and it does seem his case is hopeless, though I hate to see anyone in jail. I have mentioned his case in the small booklet that will be published in Dublin in a few months time. This may do him some good.

We are certainly pressing on for sites. Venni and I went over to France last week (it is only 50 miles from here) and attended a meeting of the International Gypsy Committee in Paris. That is our own organisation composed entirely of educated Gypsy people and travellers. Vanko Rouda, who was at Ballinasloe last year, is the secretary. A Gypsy from Algeria, Juan Fernandez, is the president at the moment.

We were parents of honour at Vanko Rouda's son Manuel's baptism and the next day reported about the situation in Ireland. The Gypsy people in France were shocked to hear about the conditions many families in Ireland are living in, especially those in tents. They condemned the Irish Government for the way travellers are treated and a report of this should have appeared in the "Evening Press" and "Irish Times" on October 11 or 12.

The Gypsies and travellers in England are now going to form their own association and a meeting is being held in London on December 10th., which is "Human Rights Day". We expect about 1,000 families to be represented at the meeting and Vanko Rouda or Juan Fernandez are coming over from France for the occasion. You will probably see something in the Press about this when the time comes.

There are two things you can do to help make the new association a success: send us a letter giving the support of the travellers around Cork, saying they support the plan to get sites and secondly, give 5 copies of the "Travellers' Voice" newspaper which we intend to bring out.

I only hope you will be well soon and able to keep up the good work.

We are all well enough here. Venni is going to college in London studying to be a teacher so that later on, we hope, we will be able to start more schools for travelling children.

By the way, there is to be a gathering of Gypsies in France next summer and any one wishing to come from Ireland is especially welcome. There will be a camp set up in the grounds of this castle the Gypsy people have bought and lessons will be given to the children of the families that come.

I should say too, that the Gypsy people are seeking recognition from the United Nations through the committee in Paris. If we can get United Nations support the governments in the different countries will have to do something.

I can hardly believe that Keating and O'Malley have done nothing since. And they asked us not to march to the City Hall because they were going to get the travellers a site. What have they done?

Glad to hear you got something out of the Health Authority.



no 4 St Johns square  
Blackpool Cork  
Ire

Dear Grattan

Sorry for delaying  
answering your letter. But  
I was not too well I am  
in hospital again at the  
north Infirmary but I may  
be going home soon  
and anyway write to  
above address Philomena  
will bring in the post to  
me. Things are just  
the same here in Cork  
Well about Donald Driscoll  
in jail his record is  
very bad and now



his brother and two  
cousins are up for a  
safe 3700 pounds taken  
at Bandon Co Cork. His  
father died a few years  
ago and his mother  
was unable to control  
the four boys. They ran  
amok. The mother was killed by  
a lorry in which she  
was a passenger with  
other itinerants 2 killed  
and two in hospital  
still. It happened last  
July so I think leave  
Dunscoll case lie  
but keep up the pull



3

for sites for Itinerants  
Well the Health & d  
Authority settled (2-2-6)  
weekly its not much  
but on account of  
Philomena working they  
would give no more  
Well I am not to  
bad now I.e. I will  
be home soon I  
hope your self and  
wife and family  
are keeping well  
I will close now  
hoping to hear  
from you again  
your friend Mary Carroll.